

(30)

A Discourse  
Vppon a Question  
of the Estate of this  
time.

*Henry IV, King of France*  
*12* *1610* *1614*

Faithfully translated out  
of French by E. A.



L O N D O N

Printed by Iohn Wolfe, and are to be sold at his  
shop over against the great south  
dore of Pauls.

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Question

Answer



Answer

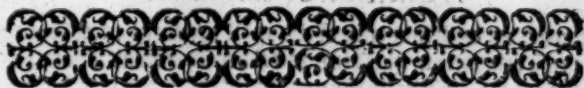
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*Why doth not the King become a Catholike? If he would become a Catholike, his realme would soone be at peace: all his subiectes would obey him, and without any difficultie acknowledge him.*

This is the daily speeche of diuers: but let vs consider whether it be not of persons as farre different in humours, as they differ in intents.



When the leaguers began to doubt of the good successe of their affaires, to mistrust their owne forces, and to imagine, that in the end, the king might become maister, they gaue out, that it was requisite he should become a Catholike, alleadging, that afterwards on such assurance as they might gather, that he meant god earnest, they would acknowledge him to be their king, supposing, that if they must needs grow to that passe, that of necessitie they must obey him, they would at the least perswade and make the simple people (whome they had abused) to beleue that their first stirring vp of these commotions and troubles of war, tended only to the preservation of the Cathol. Apostol. Romish religion, and the kings conuersion. But these speeches would much better haue belermed the mouths of other Catholikes that did continue in their duties, then theirs: for they are for to remember, that the late deceased king was as great a catholike as any of his predecessors, and yet was it he whome the Leaguers did first set vpon, against him directed they their first exclamations, iniuries, and reproches, in his life time began they their conspiracies, rebellions, and disobedience: against his person and estate did they so farre

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attempt, as with the abuse of the most apparant professors of Romish religion among them, to deliberate, consult of, and conclude his death, whom finally most barbarously and horribly they strooke and slew through a Iacobine Friar, who was by them induced and brought thereto.

The same Leaguers are also to remember, that by their writings and diffamatory Libelles printed and published at such time as they thought the King that now is to be overthrown: past hope of ever attaining to the succession of this Crowne, they proclaimed him a relaps, aduolwing, that albeit he would returne into the bosome of the catholike Church, yet he was no longer receivable to the succession of the Crowne, and so consequently his subjects were dispensed with for acknowledging him or yeelding him any obedience: yea this they caused to be preached abroad by the hired tongues of their preachers. Many other such speeches and writings of the same Authors coulde I here alleadge to reprove and conuince them of contradiction, and so to shew them to be nothing lesse then ledde with so holy a desire of the kings conuersion, were it the Argument of this Discourse: but being content with this litle, which in respect of them, I haue but touched by the way, I will indevour to answer and satisfie others that doe use the same speech, albeit with other affection and meaning then they.

Among sundry that giue themselves out to be the Kings seruants, we daily heare no other speeches but these: Would to God the King would become a Catholike: That he would vouchsafe so much content to the Catholikes, as to go to masse: so shoulde the Leaguers no longer haue any cloke for their rebellion, the Colonies that they holde should yeelde him obedience: and to be briefe, we should obtaine peace, that is so necessary to this realme:

My maisters, sith you are the Kings seruants, or at the least, that you do so terme your selves, and that it seems, besides your own sayings, that you would haue vs beleue you so to be: I dare presume that you will hearken to my reasons, and accept of them with a milde and upright mind: for how free soeuer I be in my words, yet do I meane to say nothing that may be offensive vnto you.

I pray you, my maisters, these wishes and desires, together  
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with such zealous sighs as seeme to procede from your stomaks, do they simply growe of a holy affection to the wealth and peace of Gods Church and this realme, and the saluation of the King, or rather of some affected shew, then of any true essence of good will: I am content to take them in the first sense, which is the best, and to beleue that sincerely you are of opinion, that if the King would speedely, without tarrying vntill a Councell hath determined the controuersies that at this day raigue throughout christendome about the diuersities of opinions, concerning the Cath. Apost. and Romish religion, yelde himselfe to be instructed in the Catholike religion, his realme would immediately growe to peace, and all factions and partialities amongst vs cease.

I would to God that that were the onely let, and in so holy a desire wil I neuer giue place to any. Besides, I am assured, that the King is so ready to learne, that he will easely be content to be instructed and brought to the Cath. Apost. Romish religion, in case any man can shew and proue him to be in any error: yet, may I tell you, that this remedy is not sufficient to cure our diseases. Do you beleue, that the Leaguers doe in heart desire that the King would be brought to the Cath. Apost. Romish religion: If you do so thinke, you are deceived. They seeme to desire it, but they would be very soe if it should be so, yea, albeit the King had done it, yet would they yelde him no more obedience then they now do, but rather they would vse his returne to the Cath. Church as a meane to seuer the Germans, Switzers, and other protestant nations from the Kings friendship, and so bring him to lose al credit and reputation both within and without the realme: a matter which great princes do continue according as they are thought of, and are in effect constant, couragious and steadfast in their good purposes. Marke therefore this one onely matter among many other of like pollicy, which now I thinke meete to shew you, so; so may you discouer the truth of these their speeches.

The chiefe of the League, and among others the D. of M<sup>a</sup> raine, persequing one of the kings chiefeest humane forces to consist in the succour that he expecteth from the Germanes, fearing

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nothing so much as the discent of an army of that nation, haue by their agents and factors giuen to vnderstand to the princes Electors, and other lords and potentates of Germany, that the King was become, or at the least had sworn and promised the officers of the crowne and French nobility, that he would become a Catholike: That already both about his person, and in his principall and most important affaires within the realme and without, he vsed almost none but Catholikes. Which to be so, sayde they, mark what they be whom he hath sent to be dealers in the leauy of such souldiours as he desireth of you: be they not all Catholikes? Yea, euen the same Spinisters and Ambassadors whome the late King vsed: What occasion therefore haue your Lordships to grant your succor to the king of France (for they do not otherwise entitle the King) rather then vnto the house of Lorraine and Guise, or to the King of Spaine their king and confederate? With this sleight and subtilty haue they troubled the Kings affaires in Germany, and slacked the leauy of his men of war. What then would they do if indeede the king were become a Catholike, considering that vpon a simple apparance only they haue so shaken the amity which the princes of Germany do beare to the king: Hereupon therefore ye may conclude, that al the instance that the leaguers make, to cause the King to returne to the Catholike religion, tends only to withdraw from him the loue of foren protestant Princes, so to weaken his forces of so much. Also that albeit he were become a Cath. yet the King of Spaine, with the houses of Lorraine and Guise, and other his enemies, would neuerthelesse prosecute the warre against him, and that with moze power and strength then yet they haue: for vndoubtedly they would vse the power of Germany & other the protestants that now do assist the king in the defence of his succession and lawfull right to this crowne, which they indouour to wrest from him, and al other the princes of his blood and familie.

This is the cause that the King (being well informed of the drifts and practises aforesaide, hath dispatched the L. Vicount of Turenne to the Quene of England, and thence into Germany, to assure the protestant Princes of the contrarie of that that his enemies haue bviued among them to his hindrance, and to  
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They thinke that it was no newes that he did the service of catholike, considering he had the like before he came to this crown. Also, that he intended equally to fauour and vse all his obedient seruants and subjects without acception or difference of religion: with assurance likewise to the saide Lady the Queene of England and protestant princes of Germany, that at what time soeuer he should cause himselfe to be instructed in the catholike religion, he will withall procure to all christendome the benefite of reunion in one sole faith and religion, thereby at once to cease all diuisions, warres and partialities arising vpon the diuersitie of opinions in religion. Let vs therefore, I pray you, a little examine what may bring to all christendome in generall, and particularly to this realme, the accomplishment of your desires.

It were some what if the king were instructed and brought to the cath. Apost. and Romish religion, and with all my heart my selfe do wish it as earnestly as any of you, yet must you with me confesse, that albeit we might reap the contentment of the sight hereof, yet his subjects that are indeed with the like opinion, would not neuerthelesse be so sone reclaimed: witnes Cassiodorus who in the person of Theodorike king of the Gothes doth say: Religion dependeth not vpon our commaundement, for no man is forced to beleue against his will: witnes also S. Bernard, who in another place saith: Faith must be perswaded, not forced, whereby these two great personages doe freely confesse, that kings haue no power ouer the consciences: besides that, nothing should be so voluntary as religion, wherein, if the spirit be forced, it may wel be said, that religion is taken a way, and there is none at all left. And indeed we haue found that our kings how zealous catholikes soeuer, could not in threescore yeares space neither by their examples of earnest Catho. Apost. and Romish religion, neyther by fires, tortures or temporall weapons tame or force the consciences of their subjects. To what purpose then were it for the king to be a catholike, vntlesse his protestant subjects would so become also: I do already seeme to heare some cry out saying: we would perswade, yea, even force the king to denounce war against them, vntlesse they would conforme themselves. Alas, so should yee returne into that where-



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but ye seeke to depart. You say, The king becoming a catholike, we shall be at peace: yet in your other discourse you see, that creeping out of one war, we shall fall into another as dangerous, or rather worse then the former. Let us then crie alarm as much as we list, for that is no cure for our calamities: weapons prouoke weapons, and our minds only are sicke, which we must seeke to cure by documents and reasons onely. Thus much for the particularity of this realme.

Shall the generall state of christendome be any whit the better? Is the king more able to reduce foren protestant Nations to the cath. apost. Romish religion? There wil be no want of sicebards of war to tel me with their small discourses: That the king who is a great warrior, may with the assistance of the rogne and forces of our holy father the Pope, and the King of Spaine, in few yeares reduce the foraine people and Nations into the bosome of the Romish church. Such discourses are much amisse, as experience of that which is past teacheth us: for so should we reenter into such a labyrinth, as without other more milde and lawfull meanes, and Gods great helpe, we shall not easely get out againe: yea, so should we fall to turning of an infinite wheele, able to leade us and all christendome to a finall destruction.

Moreover, ye are to thinke, that it were very wisely to the inuolable faith of the king, to his constancie, inuincible magnanimitie, honour and reputation, so sleightly and sodainly to alter his religion, whether in hope of a more peaceable raigne, or in intent to force and racke consciences, and in all extremities to leany war against those that haue assided him in all his aduersities, and against whome we are to imagine, that he beareth no bad minde, Altho himselfe being in the like case hath felt, that euen in his soule, he thought it good. Which also is the cause, thit he iudging others affection to religion by his owne, will not force the consciences of his catholikes, and woulde you then that he should force the protestants? Judge ye whether it were any reason. Do we mean to play with the R. and make him in his actions (which ought to be kept in measure and compass) wylke after our fantasies? Let us at this time be content  
with



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With his declarations published both before & since his comming to this crowne, which haue relation hereto, and doe open to vs his resolution.

I haue peradventure more briefly then I shoulde, or then the matter deserves, touched such inconueniences as are to be feared, or may come to passe, in case the king should reclaime himselfe to the cathol. religion as readily as some doe desire: but because by this little that I haue said, others may easily supply such considerations as may be conceiued in this behalfe, which I leaue to the discretion of those that list more deeply to penetrate therein, I will procede to intreat of the profit and commoditie that may redound to al christendome, so long as the king standeth fast in the declarations which he hath published both before and since his comming to the crowne, so; matter of conscience and religion, wherein he alwayes submitted him selfe to the determination of a generall or nationall councell.

The king is not alone in this realme of his religion, there are but ouer many instructed therein, that do professe the same. Besides in this realme alone are there many withdrawen from the Romish Church, but also in England, Scotland, Denmarke, Sweden, Polesland, Germany, Switzerland, and other places, being more then halfe christendome. What way therfore do ye thinke to be best to reclaime al these nations to the obedience of the cath. apost. Romish church, whether war, or a free generall councell: Inquisitions, fires, gibbets, murders, warres, battels, siege of towne, leagues, conuenticles, slaughters, assaults, paysonings: in briefe, all other meanes and subtilties in the worlde, that these 30. yeres could be practised to the great desolation and detriment of al christendome, but especially of this realme, haue as yet nothing preuailed. Only they haue made a number of Atheists, Libertines and Epicures, contempters of God, his word, and church: we haue found these medicines to be no fitter to the cure of the sicknes of the mind, then is a strong, cleane, and summing wine to the frantike or burning ague: but rather to resemble oile to quench a flaming fire: or as when a man hath paine in his arme, so; the curing therof to cut off his leg, or other member. My maisters, the Apostles and antient fathers of the Church

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never used any such toles for the rooting out of these errors and heresies which from time to time were sown and planted therein. Marke in the Acts of the Apostles what they did in the beginning, in the cutting off of meats, and abolishing of Iudaisme which some through the circumcision went about to continue in the church, after grace given by Jesus Christ. Consider what the Emperour Constantine the great did for the suppression and condemning of the heresie of Arius. See also what other Emperours did in like cases, what course they tooke to abolish the heresies of the Nestorians, Pelagians, Anabaptists, and others, as the Councilles called for the same do testifie. Why then shall not we do the like in these dayes, where the question concerneth not a handfull of people retired from the Romish church, but even halfe christendome?

But now here comineth some angrie fellow that will tell me, that the heresies of these dayes are already condemned by the council of Trent: and therefore, if that a processe already iudged even by decree, where all parties have answered reciprocally, is not to be reduced to the file, what shall then become of a processe iudged by default, and contumacie, where the parties have neither appeared nor answered? But omitting all other causes of nullitie alledged against the said Council, as by sundry booke expressly written both appeare: the Protestants and Huguenots do say and complaine that they are not heard in the said council of Trent. That albeit they were thereto summoned and called, yet they durst not appeare, as doubting of the safety of their persons, by reason of a certaine principle both then, and yet holden by some of our divines, importing, That faith is not to be kept with heretikes: and fearing the like successe as happened to those, who contrarie to the publike faith, and the Emperour Sigismundes safeconduct, were put to death at the council of Constance. If we were once sufficiently grounded to condemne this opinion and error, may we not be so againe? It is not the first time that there have bene divers councils holden for the rooting out of one selfe heresie. With there have bene two Councils holden in Italie, and one Synode in France, for the determining of the opinion of a meane Deacon of Saint Maurice of Angiers; is it not greater reason to call a ge-  
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Herall free counsell for so many peoples and nations of Christendome, as at this day are of diuers opinions: Let vs then shew that we feare not the touchstone: yea, let them know that equitie and truth are on our side, which can neuer be reuerfed in the presence of God, who by his holy spirite alwaies assisteth a free counsell lawfully assembled and holden.

I could be content here to make a digression and exclamation against our holy fathers the Popes, who are or should be the common fathers of all faithfull and Catholike people, for suffering so much christian blood to be shed about these arguments and controuersies in religion: also, for that they haue rather fauoured, allowed, and consented to the leaping of such wars hereabout, then used the spirituall sword, the which is Gods word, for the cutting off of the course of heresie: but in respect of the reuerence of their memorie: the place that they haue holden, the honor that I owe to that holy sea, and eschewing of offence, I will holde my peace.

I say therefore, that as this sickenes of diuersitie of opinions in religion is spirituall, so it is requisite thereto to applie spiritual remedies and medicines. To say with some, that the king is to be instructed, we may say as much of al other that holde the same opinions as he doth, and so when shal we haue done teaching of every one particularly: Againe, thinke you so to win the consent of the inhabitants of England, Scotland, Denmarke, Sweden, Germany, and other countries that haue free exercise of their religion without controlement: Wene you that the doctours of Sorbonne, and other such diuines shall be welcome to them in particular, when they come to minister vnto them this sode and instruction: Ye are deceiued: it is a mere mockerie, neither can that be the necessarie remedy to this disease. Nothing but a generall counsell can cure so generall a sickenesse. For the honour of God therefore, my Masters, you that are seruantes to God and the king, as well Cleargie men as others, neuer withstand this course. And you of the League, let reason rule you, as well your affaires are but in bad case: I say and affirme, that vnto such as in lieu of employing themselves about the calling of a generall counsell, shall withstand and hinder the same, we may iustly attribute the causes of whatsoeuer damage may ensue to the catho.

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apostol. and Romish religion, aduowning that they be guilty and answerable before god for al the robberies, murders, fires, spoils, ransoms, violacions, ruines, calamities, and other outrages, and erreffe of the warres. I know well enough, my maisters, that many of you do wish that the king would become a catholike, to the end ye might haue peace, and ye desire peace to the end to returne to your houses, there to inioy your wonted commodities and pleasures. But if ye obtaine not this wish at Gods hand, ye may be well assured, that (as in a certaine place it is saide) it is because ye as ke amisse. God knoweth your hearts, and can answer ye as Christ answered the somnes of Zebede, Ye wot not what ye aske: Let vs first therefore aske and seeke after the kingdome of God and his righteousness, so shall all things be added thereto. For I do certainly beleue that the first point requisite hereto, were to change and reforme our maners, our pride, vanitie, couetousnes, ambition and pleasures, with other our sins and bad demeanors, and to embrace charittle with the loue of God and our neighbor, which at this day are not onely cooled, but euen almost quite quenched in vs. But sith I am no diuine, without grounding my selfe any deeper vpon diuinity, I will ende this discourse in the same simple stile wherein I began.

A hundred and a hundred times, considering the spoiles and desolations proceeding of the tragedies stirred vpon throughout Christendome, but especially in this realme, vnder the pretence of diuersity of opinions in matter of religion, I haue studied how they might be appeased, yet still my minde hath giuen me, and I haue thought it good (vnder Gods good pleasure, who only is able to free vs from these miseries) for some mighty christian prince, touched with the spirite of God, a louer of his owne saluation, together with the peace and vniou of the vniuersall Church, whose worde and saith had neuer bene called in question, to labour to the pope, emperour, and other christian kings and princes, to summon an assembly in manner of a counsell, or generall conference, whereto it might be lawfull for al christian nations to send their embassadors, deputies, doctours and diuines, men of milde and tractable humours, such as especially respected the glory of God, the saluation of themselves and their neighbours, and the peace of all christendome.

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Heere come, to the ende, by the testimony and authority of the holy scriptures, the auncient counsels, the doctours and fathers of the church, such as haue alwayes bene receiued and allowed, to agree and conclude vpon a publike and general confession of faith, that in y touch whatsoever is in controuersie, or diuersly interpreted concerning the catholike apostolike and Romish doctrine and religion, as also that euery the saide embassadors and deputies should be authorized with especial power and prorie sufficient to grant, promise and sweare in the behalfe of those that might haue chosen, and sent them, to obserue and keepe, and religiously and inuolably to cause to be obserued and kept, whatsoever shall be decided, concluded and decreed in the saide assembly. And withal reuoluing in my mind who were the fittest prince in christendome, whom god might vse as an instrument in so great a worke, my heart gaue me about 8. yeares since, that the king now reigning temporally ouer vs, was most meete: yea, and euer since haue I bin perswaded, that god still preserved him to that end. In which perswasion I am greatly confirmed, when primarly I call to mind Gods wonderfull works, in the calling and bringing him to this crown. For it hath bin maruellous yea, I would gladly say euen miraculous, had not euery one seene it, or had not many particularities bene noted in sundry former writings: either if I wist, that among the kings seruants (for to them specially do I direct my speech) there were any yet so dull, as not to haue considered, and diuers times meditated vpon the course of things passed, I could gladly say vpon a brieue rehearsall of the same in this place: but studying for breuitie, least I should be tedious, I will onely say thus much: that with so extraordinarily, contrary to the opinion and expectation of a great parte, and against the willes of many french men, and some mighty foreign enemies, GOD hath raised vp, and placed in the seate royal, him whome they relected and proclaymed unworthy, I am fully and stedfastly resolved, that he hath called and chosen him, not only to raigne ouer this realme, but also to be the meane of peace and vniou throughout the catho. apostolike and Romish church, and to rote out all schismes, diuisions & abuses, that may haue bin crept in or nourished through the corruption of the time.

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Which foundation once laid, I will with Saint Paule adde thus much, that such as do resist the kings dominion ouer this realme, do resist the ordinance of God, and so purchase to themselves eternall damnation: and therefore to the end to appease Gods wrath, all the subiects of this crowne ought to vnite themselves in one will, to acknowledge and obey the king, that so we may attaine to a peace, whereby things decayed may be redressed, small ones increased, iustice flourish, and order, which by wars is subuerted and corrupted, be restored in all estates and functions, and finally the king, at the humble suite of his good and faithfull subiectes may deale with the saide Pope, Emperour, and other Kings and Princes christian, for the assembling and gathering of a generall free counsell, wherein to abolish and end all controuersies, and to refozme whatsoever is any where corrupted or amisse in matter of religion.

He thinks that already I heare a common consent of all nations christian, to hearken to this so necessary a motion: yea, that I euen heare them say, that sith the king is the dealer, and that the generall counsell shall be assembled vnder his faith and word, they will not henceforth feare to send their embassadors and deputies, as being assured that euery one may come safely: that with all liberty they shall be receiued vnto a free debating of their reasons and declarations, and to lay open whatsoever the imaginations of their mindes in matter of religion, without any feare of molestation in their liues and persons. For what Prince was there euer moze carefull of his faith then the King? With his enemies haue and daily do relie thereupon, shal not his friends do the like? But withall it is meete that the said nations together with their embassadors and deputies, considering that it is the honor and glory of God, the quiet and saluation of their soules, and the peace and vniou of the vniuersall Church that is to be dealt in, should be admonished, laying aside all affections and particular passions, all couetousnes, ambition, bitterness and obstinacy, to come and hying to the said assembly milde and tractable mindes, easie to be illuminated and guided by the light of Gods word, together with the authoritie of the doctrine of the ancient counsels and fathers of the Church, and to the same effect,



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fect, before they enter into matter and conference, they are to meete and agree vpon such authoꝝ and booke as they will accept to be the arbitratoꝝ and iudges of their controuerſies.

Who doubteth any longer of taking this course? What spirit of strife will not lende his consent hereto? Who is so great an enemy to himselfe, and to the whole name of Christianitie, as to chuse warre and tempoꝝall weapons rather then spirituall? Who controuerſie is spirituall, let it be decided with spirituall weapons: I am content to beleue that we al do agree herein, reason requirerh, necessitie foꝛcerh. And I hope that God who with his holy grace and pꝛouidence guides al things, will fauour the bolow and hearty supplications which daily for the same we do and still will poure foꝛth vnto him.

I haue already shewed that the peace of this realme must pꝛoceed of the holding of this said generall counsell, as also it will be impossible to attain to the one without the other: it shall not be amisse therefore in few words to say, that though peace, matter of religion must be stated by pꝛouiso until the resolution of what soeuer shall be agreed, decided and concluded in the saide generall counsell. It is an vsuall course to knitte againe a thꝛade in the same place where it was broken: and when an Instrument of Musicke is out of tune, men vse not soꝛ to breake the rest of the strings, but by wresting and slacking of them, to reduce them to a consent and harmony as wel as they may. Euen so may peace be knit againe, and the harmony of this estate be restored in the place where it was broken. And this may be compassed by reestablishing things into the same state wherein they were when the Leaguers through their manifest conspiracies, commotions, and pꝛactises, forced the late king to reuoke the Edict that had preferred and maintained vs seauen yeares on a rowe in happie peace, concord, and tranquillitie throughout the realme.

To conclude therefore, in so much as the Leaguers intent in seeming to wish the king would become a catholike, is wicked and captious, as we haue already shewed, also that the intents of others that terme themselves the kings seruants, and make the like wish, are not so wel grounded, but that they may be reuerſed by other as strong reasons, as may appere by such as already haue



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betwixt debated, let vs hereafter cease this importunate and common proposition and principle, and henceforth suspect all such as shall vse it, accompting them for such, as vnder a faire and large apparance and pretence doe weaue I wote not what ambitious and pernicious web, to the disadvantage of the wealth and seruice of the king, and the peace of his estate. And contrariwise, taking the king at his word, that he will be instructed, and consozme himselfe to whatsoever shall be decided and determined in a generall counsell, let vs stand vpon this latter aduise, whereby procuring the kings instruction and conuersion, by the saide generall counsell we may reunite the church of God into one selfe religion and confession of faith, which is the greatest benefit that we can at this present craue of our Lord, who will grant our request, in case our owne commodities and particular interests be forgotten and omitted, we seeke onely his honour and glory, together with the peace and vniou of all christendome.

FINIS.



